



(U) Shadowing Charlie Meals: A Typical Day?

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(U//FOUO) In March, I had the privilege of participating in the Agency's "Shadow the SID Leadership Program". My motivation for applying for this program is probably a little different than most participants. I'm a member of NSA's Extended Enterprise in Hawaii and a junior Intelligence Analyst who has never worked at Ft. Meade. One way I've found to stay connected with NSAW and the SID Leadership is to take full advantage of SID *today* and other SID Communication initiatives. When I was planning a TDY to Maryland for another purpose, I thought the shadowing program would be a perfect opportunity to be introduced to the big picture back at Headquarters. Needless to say, I was not disappointed and this day was truly the highlight of my trip.

(U//FOUO) Mr. Meals' day of meetings began well before I arrived and continued well after I departed. His Executive Assistant prepared me for his schedule the day before and explained that this was not a "typical day" for Charlie. What this statement meant was that most of the day's schedule consisted of a SID leadership offsite and there would not be the usual number of office calls and meetings scattered throughout the building - and that he might actually take a lunch break, which is a rarity! Although the offsite dominated the majority of the schedule, I believe I had an accurate glimpse into the scope of Mr. Meals' role and responsibilities.

(TS//SI) What struck me as most significant was how his day encompassed NSA's past, present, and future. During the Leadership offsite, Mr. Meals stepped away to present a Meritorious Civilian Award to a member of the workforce who had made significant contributions to the SID mission. Current issues were continually being dealt with, such as SIGINT support to SOUTHCOM due to heightened tensions in Haiti. This was my first exposure to an Issues Management Team in action. All these things were dealt with as Mr. Meals and the SID teams were participating in their offsite with Information Technology Infrastructure Services and then the Foreign Affairs Directorate to coordinate resources for FY06.

(U//FOUO) If I described everything that Mr. Meals did to make this a worthwhile experience, this article would never end. He was personally involved in ensuring that my day spent shadowing him was interesting and productive. He explained early in the day that for me to absorb all the information that I would encounter, it would be good for me to take notes, and he would then discuss anything that I needed further clarification on during our one-on-one time. My list of unfamiliar concepts grew throughout the day, but Mr. Meals took the time from his busy schedule to discuss anything that was on my mind, even down to explaining mundane acronyms and HQ jargon (there was a LOT!).

(U//FOUO) Because Mr. Meals and his staff seemed concerned that I was not experiencing a "typical day", they had a copy of his calendar from the previous week to review with me so that I would have a better picture of his schedule. Another thing that impressed me about Mr. Meals was the depth and breadth of the knowledge that he brings to the SID leadership team. His previous assignment as Chief of NSA/CSS Pacific gave him incredible insight into the issues facing the Pacific AOR (Area of Responsibility), the AOR of this century. Both MG Quirk and Mr. Meals bring unique perspectives and backgrounds to their jobs. The endless energy and enthusiasm that seemed to pour out of these two was contagious.

(U//FOUO) As mentioned earlier, my main purpose for shadowing Charlie Meals was to familiarize myself with the SIGINT Directorate's operations at NSAW and to compare it my experiences here in Hawaii. The day certainly contributed in a positive way to my first impressions of Headquarters. I am pleased to say that I was faced with many more similarities

then differences and that the field and Headquarters actually resembled each other on many levels. This experience was unforgettable and has made me proud to be part of the SID workforce, even though it may not have been a "typical day".

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